

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:		02/03/2010	
		N/A / attached		Consultation Expiry Date:		04/02/2010	
Officer				Application Number(s)			
Jonathan Markwell				2009/5672/P			
Application Address				Drawing Numbers			
9 - 10 Southampton Place London WC1A 2EA				Please see decision notice			
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature				
Proposal(s)							
Infill of lightwell with glazed platform and installation of associated access gate on shopfront elevation (on southern side only) to provide outdoor seating area for existing restaurant (Class A3).							
Recommendation(s):		Refuse Planning Permission					
Application Type:		Full Planning Permission					
Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:		Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Informatives:							
Consultations							
Adjoining Occupiers:		No. notified	04	No. of responses	00	No. of objections	00
				No. electronic	00		
Summary of consultation responses:		A site notice was erected on 13/01/2010, expiring on 03/02/2010. No responses were received.					
CAAC/Local groups* comments: <small>*Please Specify</small>		Bloomsbury CAAC comments that they have no objection to the proposals.					
Site Description							
<p>The application site is located on the eastern side of Southampton Place, approximately 13 metres from the junction of High Holborn (to the south). The application site comprises a basement and six-storey brick building (upper two floors are set back and largely glazed in appearance) and is considered to form part of the established terrace facade along Southampton Place. The basement and ground floor unit has recently been granted for a Class A3 use (see relevant history below), with Nando's presently occupying the site at the time of the site visit on 12/01/2010.</p> <p>The surrounding area is characterised by a mix of uses close to the High Holborn / Southampton Row / Kingsway interchange. These include office, retail and financial and professional service uses within buildings in excess of 5 storeys in height. There is only a limited amount of residential accommodation in close proximity to the site.</p> <p>The site is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. Although the building is not listed, there are several listed buildings located adjacent to the site. This includes No. 1-8 (consecutive) Southampton Place (Grade II*), which is directly to the north-west of the application site on the eastern side of Southampton Place. The buildings and the attached railings comprise a terrace of</p>							

eight houses which are three-storeys, attic and basement in nature. They also include attached cast iron railings with torch flambé finials. Each building is accessed via entrances approached by steps over basement areas.

On the western side of Southampton Place No's 14-22 (consecutive) Southampton Place and the attached railings are grade II* listed, comprising a terrace of 9 houses dating from c1758-63. In addition, No's 127 and 129 High Holborn (Grade II) are located on the junction of High Holborn and Southampton Place. In addition, the application site is also located within a Central London Frontage and an archaeological priority area.

Relevant History

Wider application site comprising 125 High Holborn, comprising 9-10 Southampton Place, 121-125 High Holborn and 3-9 & 11-13 Southampton Row

2005/1082/P - Demolition and redevelopment of 9-10 Southampton Place and 3-9 Southampton Row, and demolition and redevelopment behind the retained facade at 121-126 High Holborn, 1 and 11-13 Southampton Row to provide new office and retail accommodation together with associated plant, servicing and parking. Granted 05/08/2005.

Application site only

2009/1057/P - Change of use from shop (Class A1) to restaurant and café (Class A3) of unit 8 at basement and ground floor level on Southampton Place frontage. Granted 04/06/2009.

2009/3714/P - Alterations to existing shopfront to include retention of sliding opening panels and installation of louvered panel above one of the existing entrance doors to ground floor unit (Class A3). Granted 10/11/2009.

2009/3717/A - Installation of internally illuminated fascia sign, menu box and projecting sign to front elevation of unit (Class A3). Granted 10/11/2009.

Relevant policies

London Borough of Camden Replacement Unitary Development Plan 2006

SD1 – Quality of life

SD6 – Amenity for occupiers and neighbours

B1 – General design principles

B3 – Alterations and extensions

B6 – Listed buildings

B7 – Conservation areas

Camden Planning Guidance

Bloomsbury Conservation Area Statement (Draft)

Assessment

Introduction

Planning permission is sought for the infilling of an existing lightwell on the south side (towards the junction with High Holborn) of the existing restaurant shopfront. The lightwell is situated between the shopfront and the existing railings, which form the site boundary onto the Southampton Place footway at this point. It is proposed to install a glazed platform in order to infill the lightwell and so provide an outdoor seating area within the boundary of the application site for patrons of the existing Nando's restaurant. To secure this area, it is proposed to install a lockable gate adjacent to the main entrance of the restaurant. To clarify, no alterations are proposed to the existing lightwell and associated steps on the northern side of the shopfront elevation.

As means of context, it is noted that this application follows on from permission 2009/3714/P at the site (see relevant history section above). Works associated with the infilling of the front lightwell on the south side of the shopfront were previously sought by this application. However, during the course of this application this element of the proposals was omitted. The present application therefore solely

seeks permission for this element which was omitted from a previous application at the site.

Design

In relation to design matters it is considered important to first verify that Policy B3b states that the infilling or covering of front light wells will not be permitted where it would cause harm to the appearance and setting of a building or the established character of the surrounding area.

It is considered from the design of the elevations to the Southampton Place street frontages that the original design concept from the 2005/1082/P permission was to adopt an architectural approach that is harmonious with the existing street, whilst also being clearly contemporary. In this regard the design of the elevation is considered to be part of, and is considered should be seen as part of, the wider terrace along the east side of Southampton Place. The elevation of No. 9-10 is considered to continue the rhythm of the street with three new bays at similar spacing. The new bays are considered to be defined by vertical openings in the new façade, in which the channels are inserted to act as the down pipe. The Georgian terrace has a regular and repetitive rhythm of bays. This is defined by the chimney profile, down pipes and front entrance bridge and lightwell. The attributes are not considered to mimic the Georgian elements that delineate the horizontal emphasis, but rather to use elements and detailing consistent with the wider elevation already established. This is considered to include the lightwells which have been inserted to maintain a consistency of such features, when viewed as part of the overall streetscape.

This is considered to be reinforced by the Design Report submitted as part of the original application (2005/1082/P) of the wider site. It states that

'The light well and railings that lie in front of our glazed shop fronts, which provide the barrier to the street. The approach of the light well also follows the fashioning of a Georgian terrace, where the frontage would often drop below pavement level, continuing the facade down to basement level. Our facade does the same; with the brick 'skin' continuing down to basement level with the light well being edged by a traditional approach of black iron railings to provide guarding.'

As such, the proposed works are considered to dilute the original design and cause harm to the appearance and setting of a building / established character of the surrounding area, which is contrary to policy B3 of the UDP. In turn, the proposed development is not considered to either preserve or enhance this part of the conservation area; instead it is considered to cause harm (contrary to policy B7). In addition the proposal to infill the lightwell will subsequently cause harm to the setting of the adjoining terrace of listed buildings at No's 1-8 Southampton Place (contrary to policy B6).

Furthermore, the proposed works are considered to unbalance the frontage of the host building, with one side of the frontage including a lightwell and the other side not. This is not considered to respect the site and its setting, instead it is considered to cause harm to its appearance (contrary to policy B1). This will be exacerbated by the proposed usage of the area as an outdoor seating area in conjunction with the restaurant use. The predominant character of the street is considered to be largely domestic in nature, although it is acknowledged that the application site is in commercial use. The proposed infilling of the lightwell is thus considered to cause harm to the character and appearance of the street and adjoining grade II* terrace.

There are no design issues raised in relation to the design of the proposed access gates, which are similar in appearance to the existing railings which presently enclose the application site on the Southampton Place frontage.

Amenity

Notwithstanding the above, it is considered that the infilling of the lightwell in itself would not raise any significant amenity issues that would constitute a sustainable reason for refusal of the application. The area at basement floor level adjacent to the lightwell proposed to be in-filled is in use as a staffroom associated with the Class A3 restaurant use at the premises. Such an area is not required to have

access to natural daylight/sunlight. No outlook or loss of privacy matters are raised from the basement floor level. As such, no amenity issues are raised in this regard.

In respect of the proposed use of the in-filled area as an outdoor seating area, this is not considered to sufficient in size to cause significant noise or disturbance issues to nearby occupiers. Access to this area is secured through a new gate, which is appropriately sized to allow easy access to the proposed outdoor seating area.

Recommendation

Refuse Planning Permission

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